

## Entomologising in Andorra, 1978

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The customs patrol scattered as we swept over the frontier into Andorra. Not that we had anything against them but when peaked-capped figures appeared suddenly out of the thick mist in the middle of the road it was only the skilful driving of J.M.C.H. that avoided an international incident.

It was towards the end of an exhausting journey south in which we had already been delayed the evening before by a dock strike at Dieppe necessitating a longer route via Boulogne. We had looked forward to some collecting on our way through France but the weather was far from favourable until we reached the delectable limestone country around Cahors and then the sun came out for a while.

We sampled an area of rough ground near Payrac and almost immediately a mint female *Maculinea arion* L. was netted. There were further examples of this butterfly nearby in an overgrown orchard and they were of a large bright form with considerable variation in the forewing spotting. *Brintesia circe* D. & S. was fairly common and several other species were flying including *Papilio machaon* L., *Leptidea sinapis* L., *Thymelicus actaeon* Rott., *Cupido minimus* Fuess., *Nordmannia ilicis* Esp., *Brenthis daphne* D. & S., *Melitaea didyma* Esp. and *Coenonympha dorus* Esp.; and among the moths, *Zygaena hippocrepidis* Hb. (det. W.G.T.). A large ichneumon wasp was netted that turned out to be *Stauropoctonus bombycivorus* (Grav.) (det. I.D.G.), rare in Britain, but known for example from the New Forest, and has been reared from the Lobster Moth (*Stauropus fagi* L.).

Pressing on, we reached the foothills of the Pyrenees and then the weather turned sour once more and there was thick mist all the way up the tortuous road from Ax le Thermes to Andorra. After negotiating the aforementioned customs officers, who were rather angry over their lost dignity and told us so in at least two languages, we made better progress in the rapidly improving road conditions and finally reached our destination at St. Julia de Loria in the late evening.

Apart from an occasional shower we saw no more rain during the five days we stayed in the principality and enjoyed collecting in glorious weather and amongst superb mountain scenery. We recorded over 90 species of butterflies alone. Dr. P. J. L. Roche, who resides in Andorra, met us the following morning and remained an invaluable guide and entertaining companion throughout our stay.

The first day, July 20th, was spent at about 3,500 ft. just east of S. Julia, in a lightly wooded valley which Dr. Roche has made the subject of an ecological survey. Insect life was abundant in this relatively lowland part of Andorra. The larger fritillaries, *Argynnis adippe* D. & S., *Argynnis paphia* L. and *Brenthis daphne* D. & S. sailed among the thistles, and a

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white-flowered elder-like bush attracted hairstreaks and coppers, and also, to our delight, *Libythea celtis* Laich. There was a good selection of blues and *Melitaea* species, including a large race of *Melitaea phoebe* D. & S.; *Melanargia lachesis* Hb. was common, and *Hipparchia alcyone* D. & S. skipped around the tree trunks with elusive agility. *Satyrus actaea* Esp. was represented by newly emerged males. A few rather worn *Aporia crataegi* L. floated around the bushes and occasionally visited thistles in the lower part of the valley. The previous day Dr. Roche had taken a fine male *Apatura ilia* D. & S. *f. clytie* beside the shallow stream, and in the same spot, just after mid-day another male of this magnificent butterfly swept by J.M.C-H. who narrowly missed netting it. By 4.30 p.m. the prospect of liquid refreshment in Dr. Roche's residence was irresistible, but we felt that 49 butterfly species recorded on our first day was no mean score.

Among the moths noted were: *Zygaena filipendulae* L. (det. W.G.T.), a five-spotted form which we were to encounter later in the vicinity; the geometrid *Pseudoterpna coronillaria* Hb. (det. D.S.F.) which is similar to our *P. pruinata* Hufn. though greyer; *Chrysocrambus dentuellus* P. & M. (det. M.S.), and en route to the valley, *Dysauxes punctata* F. (det. D.S.F.).

The following morning we set off for some higher level, collecting between 6,000 and 6,500 ft. at Encamp Cortals. At this height one could feel the bite in the air and a slight tachycardia — quite apart from that caused by chasing the fast-flying *Colias phicomone* Esp. which were careering over the flowery slopes. We both collected a short series of this butterfly, and J.M.C-H., as well as netting micros and insects of several other orders, also managed to capture two *Euchloe ausonia ausonia* Hb. — a butterfly not previously on Dr. Roche's Andorran list. The little alpine fritillary *Boloria napaea* Hoffmannsegg was very common here — we thought we had *Boloria pales* D. & S. as well, but all the specimens subsequently shown to Dr. L. G. Higgins were found to be *napaea*. In the damper parts of the valley *Palaeochrysophanus hippothoe* L., *Brenthis ino* Rott. and the usually local *Procllossiana eunomia* Esp. were also well represented. Among a carpet of scabious C.J.L. took two *Euphydryas aurinia* Rott. which, though of a darkish and small form, were not quite true *debilis* in appearance. There were five species of *Erebia* in evidence, but one of these, *Erebia cassioides* Hohenwarth was only just emerging at this relatively late date and we found a single fresh male each. *E. meolans* de Prunner was locally common (in the superb form *bejarensis* Chapman) but *E. oeme* Hb., *E. epiphron* Knoch., and *E. euryale* Esp. were common and widespread. We were pleased to find the lovely blue *Plebicula dorylas* D. & S. on a stony dry slope; and even more locally, around the clumps of geranium, fluttered the little dark *Eumedonia eumedon* Esp. This latter species was past its best, however, and anything that looked like a fresh

specimen invariably turned out to be *Cupido minimus* Fuess. on closer inspection.

Moths seen include *Macrothylacia rubi* L., *Diacrisia sannio* L., *Odezia atrata* L., *Gnophos obfuscata* D. & S. (det. D.S.F.), *Udea uliginosalis* Steph. (det. M.S.), *Pyrausta cerealis* Hbn. (det. M.S.), *Eudonia lineola* Curtis (det. M.S.), *E. murcurella* L. (det. M.S.). Also, an attractive black and white Oecophorid which according to Mr. Jäckh conforms to *Schiffermuelleria raetica* Frey, and on comparison with the series of *S. rhaetica* in the B.M.N.H. it seems nearest to ssp. *graslinella* Staudinger, though in the opinion of Dr. Sattler our specimen may well be specifically distinct.

The next day we went to Juberri a few kilometres into the mountains south east of St. Julia, and here a magnificent large race of *Parnassius apollo* L. sailed about. J.M.C-H. at one point was observed in a sort of dervish whirl in the wake of a white butterfly which flew and behaved very like *Parnassius mnemosyne* L. and which led him a fine chase only to reveal itself as *A. crataegi*. He got a round of applause from a chalet balcony high up on the hill however! Though the precipitous stony slopes were difficult to explore we found a marvellous wealth of butterfly species flying alongside the road. Among the abundant *lachesis* a good proportion of *Melanargia russiae* Esp. were to be found, *Heodes virgaureae* L. was common and a single example of *H. alciphron gordius* was taken. Fritillaries were represented mainly by *Argynnis adippe* D. & S., *A. paphia* L. and a bright form of *Melitaea didyma* Esp., but a solitary *Issoria lathonia* L. put in a brief appearance and there were one or two worn *Mellicta athalia celadussa* Fruh. and *M. phoebe*. During our stay only two *Laeosopis roboris* Esp. were taken, (one of them here at Juberri), but normally this butterfly is abundant by this date Dr. Roche informed us, and it seemed yet one more evidence of the lateness of the season. Among the burnets we took at Juberri was *Zygaena hilaris* Ochs. (det. W.G.T.).

In the early afternoon we drove back through St. Julia, and after negotiating the traffic in Andorra la Vella turned off the main road just short of Soldeu into the Val d'Incles. The high meadows here were carpeted with wild flowers—geranium, gentian, viola and cistus and flying among them a host of butterflies. *Cyaniris semiargus* Rott., *Lycaeides idas* L. and *P. hippothoe* were the commonest lycaenids and worn *Clossiana selene* D. & S. flew with the similar *P. eunomia*. *B. ino*, *B. napaea* and *Pyrgus serratulae* Ramb. were common as were the two *Erebias*, *epiphron* and *oeme*. We patrolled the thickly-growing stands of *Gentiana lutea* hoping to turn up *Maculineaalcon* D. & S. but to no avail. J.M.C-H. captured an enormous *Tabanid* fly just as it was about to feast on C.J.L. who was totally unaware of his peril. There was some dispute afterwards whether a warning had been given before or after the net descended!

Moths we recorded from there included: *Hemaris tityus* L., *Parasemia plantaginis* L., *Epirrhoe molluginata* Hbn. (det.

D.S.F.), *Omorphina cymbalariae* Hbn. (det. D.S.F.), *Stenoptilia coprodactyla* Stn. (det. M.S.), *Udea ferrugalis* Hbn. (det. F. (det. M.S.)), *Argyroploce stibiana* Gn. (det. K. T.) and *Eana argentula* Clerck (det. K.T.).

We started operations the following day above El Serrat at approximately 7,600 ft. Several species were flying at, or just below, the snow line including *Erebia pandrose* Borkhausen., *C. phicomone*, *C. croceus* Geoff., and *Pieris brassicae* L. Dr. Roche also recorded a specimen of the ubiquitous *Coenonympha arcania* L. Our main butterfly quarry was *Pontia callidice* Hb., but the only whites we saw were of the larger plebeian variety. A little lower down, at around 6,000 ft., *E. meolans* appeared, and also a large *Pyrgus* which was subsequently identified by Dr. Higgins as *P. cacaliae* Rambur and probably new to Andorra. On the lightly wooded hillside at 5,600 ft. where we concentrated our activities for the remainder of the day, *P. apollo* was fairly numerous — nearly all of them fresh males of a large race (*pyrenaicus* Harcourt-Bath). There was also a strong colony of *Mellicta parthenoides* Kef. and many *Lasiommata maera* L. *Plebejus argus* L. was represented by a fine race, *hypochiona* Ramb., with silvery blue undersides in the males. A striated aberration of *P. hippothoe* was captured and also our only specimen of *H. tityrus* Poda.

Among the moths noted were: *Euplagia quadripunctaria* Poda, *Zygaena purpuralis* Brünnich (det. W.G.T.), *O. cymbalariae* Hbn. (det. D.S.F.), *Anaitis praeformata* Hbn. (det. D.S.F.), *Catoptria falsella falsella* D. & S. (det. M.S.) and *Pyrausta porphyralis* D. & S. (det. M.S.).

Thunder clouds blew up during the latter part of the afternoon and there were a few heavy showers on our way back to S.Julia.

The 24th was our last full day in Andorra, and we were determined to make the best of it. The morning was spent in the valley east of St. Julia where we met Dr. Roche accompanied by Michael Symes, who was just commencing his holiday in Andorra. *A. ilia* failed to put in another appearance but Michael Symes recorded a specimen of the large fritillary *Pandoriana pandora* D. & S. a species new to this area. *L. celtis* seemed more in evidence than it had been a few days before and the two blues *Plebicula escheri* Hb. and *Plebicula amanda* Schneider were also about in better numbers. Single examples were taken of *P. apollo* and *M. arion*.

After lunch J.M.C.H. and C.J.L. took themselves off to the road verges near Juberri where so many species had been flying two days before. Fluttering down a precipitous stony slope was a lemon yellow *Anthocaris belia euphenoides* Staud. — the only one we had seen. Instead of turning back towards the road when it reached the dense shade of some alders, as all the other butterflies seemed to do, it kept on going and we failed to intercept it further down the road. We decided to glance at the yellow *biscutella* plants and the very first one

examined had a well-grown larva of *belia euphenoides*. Several more were found but unfortunately they suffered badly from the heat and only three survived the return journey to England. Those that did survive took very well to ordinary garden honesty in the absence of their natural pabulum. A single specimen of the emerald *Thetidia smaragdaria* F. was netted here, and a number of empty mines collected on *Malus* of *Lyonetia clerkella* L. (det. A.M.E.).

Reluctantly we had to start our preparations for the homeward journey and the following morning drove up the high winding pass out of Andorra. We had completely different weather from that we had experienced the previous time and the sun shone brilliantly — also there were no customs officers in the way. Stopping at the highest part of the road we briefly explored and another *P. cacalia* came our way. The only other butterflies were *E. pandrose*, *P. rapae*, *C. minimus*, and the yellow and black day-flying moth *Psodos quadrifaria* Salzer.

A large buddleia patch beside the road at Le Castellet near Ax le Thermes caught our eye, and on our inspecting it *Araschnia levana* L. was taken among numerous *B. daphne* and *A. adippe* imbibing from the mauve blossoms together with a magnificent carpenter bee *Xylocopa valga* Gerstaecker (det. G.R.E.). It was interesting to note that here, only a few miles north of the Pyrenees, *lachesis* appeared to be replaced by a *Melanargia* intermediate in form between that and *galathea*.

We drove most of the afternoon until we found ourselves once again in the limestone region around Cahors. Here we sampled a dry hillside covered in wild lavender and noisy with cicadas. Both *Zygaena sarpedon* Hbn. (det. W.G.T.) and *Z. fausta* L. (det. W.G.T.) were flying here, as well as numbers of the curious dragonfly-like *Libelloides longicornis* L. (Neuroptera, Ascalaphidae) (det. P.C.B.). *P. machaon* was numerous and there were plenty of the fine large *Satyrus ferula* F. flying over the dusty slopes. *Gonepteryx cleopatra* L. and *G. rhamni* L., both freshly emerged were frequent and we also recorded *Philotes baton* Berg. but so worn as to be virtually unrecognisable. The black and white *Brintesia circe* made life difficult for both butterflies and collectors by mobbing everything that came within range of their chosen perch. C.J.L. missed a large *Iphiclides podalirius* L. because of the aggressive antics of *circe* but just before we left J.M.C.H. dexterously netted one of these fine swallowtails in full flight.

This proved to be the last butterfly captured of the expedition as the following day the weather broke down, we inspected the Forêt de Rambouillet in heavy rain, and only when we were within a few miles of the Channel did the sun shine once more.

#### Species other than Lepidoptera noted in Andorra

TRICHOPTERA. Goeridae: *Silo graellsii* Pictet (det. P.C.B.), Val d'Incles, ♂, 22.vii. Sericostomatidae: *Schizopelex furcifera* McLachlan (det. P.C.B.), Juberri, ♂, 22.vii.

MECOPTERA. Panorpidae: *Panorpa meridionalis* Rambur (det. P.C.B.), St. Julia, ♀, 20.vii.

PLECOPTERA. Perlodidae: *Isoperla grammatica* (Poda) (det. P.C.B.), Juberri, ♂, 22.vii.

ORTHOPTERA. *Oedipoda caerulescens* L. (det. D.R.R.), St. Julia, 20.vii; Juberri, 22.vii. *Stauroderus scalaris* F.v.W. (det. D.R.R.), Encamp Cortals, 21.vii.

DIPTERA. Syrphidae (det. R.A.H.): *Volucella zonaria* Poda, San Julia, 24.vii; *Sericomyia lapponica* L., El Serrat (7,500 ft.), 23.vii; *Scaeva selenetica* Mg., Encamp Cortals (6,500 ft.), 21.vii. Conopidae (det. K.G.V.S.): *Sicus ferrugineus* L., Juberri, 22.vii. Asilidae (det. R.A.H.): *Cyrtopogon ruficornis* F., El Serrat, 23.vii; *Molobratia teutonus* L., El Serrat (5,600 ft.), 23.vii. Bombyliidae (det. D.J.G.): *Bombylius caescens* Mg., Val d'Incles, 22.vii; *Anthrax anthrax* Schrank, St. Julia, 20.vii. Tabanidae (det. J.E.C.): *Tabanus sudeticus* Z., El Serrat, 23.vii; Val d'Incles, 20.vii. Tipulidae (det. P.S.C.): *Nephrotoma flavescens* L., Encamp Cortals, 21.vii.

COLEOPTERA. Lepturinae: *Stenopterus rufus* (L.), ♀, Juberri, 22.vii; *Judolia cerambyciformis* (Schrank), ♀, Juberri, 22.vii; *Leptura rubra* L., ♂, Juberri, 22.vii. Scarabaeidae, Melolonthinae: *Amphimallon fuscus* (Scop.), St. Julia, 24.vii. Cleridae: *Trichodes apiarius* (L.), St. Julia, 24.vii. The Cerambycidae det. by C.R.S.; the Scarabaeidae and Cleridae det by R.D.P.

HYMENOPTERA. Apidae (det. I.H.H.Y.): *Bombus ruderarius* ssp. *montanus* Lepelletier, ♀, Encamp Cortals (6,500 ft.).

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